

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS REGULATION  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS & ENERGY**

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August 3, 2004

Werner Schweiger  
Senior Vice-President, Operations  
NSTAR Electric  
One NStar Way  
Westwood, MA 02090

Re: Reported incidents of: (1) July 30, 2004, Newton, Massachusetts and  
(2) August 2, 2004, Framingham, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Schweiger:

The Department of Telecommunications and Energy (the "Department") has received initial notification from Boston Edison Company, d/b/a/ NSTAR Electric ("NSTAR Electric" or the "Company") of the following incidents involving explosions at NSTAR Electric manholes: (1) on July 30, 2004 in the City of Newton, Massachusetts and (2) on August 2, 2004 in the Town of Framingham, Massachusetts. The Company's initial notification stated that no personal injury resulted from either of the explosions.

The Department is conducting an assessment of these incidents. To assist the Department in our assessment of these incidents, we require that NSTAR Electric submit to the Department written responses to the following questions for each of the two incidents by August 10, 2004.

1. Please provide a complete description of the incident and submit related documentation and/or information that the Company has collected concerning the likely cause of the incident.

2. Please describe the topography of the location and the surrounding infrastructure that may be relevant to the determination of the cause of the incident.
3. Please indicate date and time of the incident.
4. Please describe the manhole cover in detail including its size, weight and design characteristics. Please provide any documentation that the Company has related to the care and maintenance of the manhole cover and/or manholes where the particular cover is used.
5. Please describe any maintenance/repair performed in this particular manhole since January 1, 2000, including the date of the work, the nature of the work performed and the reason necessitating the work. Please provide documentation related to the maintenance/repair work of the manhole.
6. Please describe the facilities that are located inside the manhole and the purpose served by each facility. Please describe any other facilities known to the Company that are proximate to the manhole.
7. Please provide a one-line diagram showing the electric facilities that are located in the manhole, including the associated stations served by the lines. Also identify the cable type, vintage of the cables, normal and emergency ratings of the cables, and the loading condition of the cable immediately prior to the incident.
8. Please calculate the short circuit current at the failed cable, and estimate the mechanical force resulting from this short circuit and its impact on the manhole cover. Please provide related documentation on how the Company performed its calculation and the information relied upon for any estimates.
9. Please indicate whether the electric facilities located within this manhole have experienced any failure since January 1, 2000. If so, please explain the reason for each failure.
11. Please provide information on the equipment that failed inside the manhole as part of the current incident.
12. Please describe any associated or "sympathetic" outages that occurred coincident with this event.

Werner Schweiger  
August 3, 2004  
Page 3 of 3

14. Please indicate whether the Company has tested and found the existence of some form of gas: (a) within the manhole where the incident occurred; or (b) within any adjacent manhole.

To the extent this is an ongoing investigation, please update the Department on the status of your investigation as information becomes available. Copies of the Company's responses should be submitted to: (1) Mary L. Cottrell, Secretary; (2) Ronald F. LeComte, Director, Electric Power Division; (3) Ghebre Daniel, Engineer, Electric Power Division; and (4) John Cope-Flanagan, Esquire.

Should you have any questions concerning the information required by the Department, please contact me at 617-305-3658.

Sincerely,

Ronald F. LeComte  
Director, Electric Power Division

cc: Commission

Mary L. Cottrell, Secretary  
Timothy J. Shevlin, Jr., Executive Director  
Andrew O. Kaplan, General Counsel  
John Cope-Flanagan, Esquire  
Ghebre Daniel, Electric Power Division